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ABSTRACT

This report documents efforts to educate children who fled their homes in the 1990s because of civil war in Sudan. Current estimates place the number of displaced people at about two million. The document states that the displaced come from over 60 different ethno-linguistic groups. Many of these people do not speak Arabic and reside at present in the southern states, including the Transitional Zone of the Nuba Mountains and southern Dafur and the four official camps for the displaced in Khartoum State. The report states that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Emergency Education Program works with 480,000 school-aged children in the principal regions with displaced communities. According to the report, there are an estimated 65,000 children who are "unaccompanied," either orphans or children separated from their families, and many live in territories still in conflict. The report gives the results of a case study on Sudan, in which education officials were interviewed and four official camps for displaced persons were visited. The case study reports the following: (1) an analysis of the principal partners and how they are involved in educating displaced children; (2) a consideration of the crucial question of language and curriculum; and (3) a development of the themes of the second section through a set of proposals that recognize a special opportunity to turn the education of displaced children into a chance to promote long-term peace. (BT)

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MID-DECADE REVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS EDUCATION FOR ALL

CASE STUDY

SUDAN

SO 031 063

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FOREWORD

Five years after the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand 1990, **the International Consultative Forum on Education for All** (the EFA Forum) undertook a review of how far countries have come in their efforts to reach Education for All.

This stocktaking of progress was done by various means. It drew on statistics and reports done by ministries of education all over the world. To complement these governmental reports, the EFA Forum asked a number of independent researchers in developing countries to provide a more in-depth view of Education for All in their countries.

From among these case studies on interesting experiences in providing basic education, we have selected a few for publication. For example, these studies look at the challenges of getting girls to stay in school and complete their primary education even though they are needed in the household economy or the school environment is geared to boys; efforts to provide education in emergency situations due to war and conflict; and the provision of education in the mother tongue of the pupils to promote learning. In short, these case studies deal with some of the current issues in basic education worldwide, and they shed light on the varying conditions in which basic education takes place. The approach and perspective vary between the studies, reflecting the diversity of the actors involved in EFA. We hope you will find these studies interesting reading.

The authors of the case studies have been selected and contracted by field offices of UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO. These offices also proposed the themes of the studies. The EFA Forum Secretariat wishes to extend its thanks to the authors and the field offices that have provided efficient assistance in carrying out these case studies.

These case studies are written by independent researchers and consultants. The views expressed on policies, programmes and projects are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the EFA Forum.

Final editing was done by the Secretariat of the EFA Forum.

EDUCATING DISPLACED CHILDREN:

An Opportunity for Building Peace?

by

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November 1995

Authors' Notes

This study does not necessarily reflect the official policy or the views of the government of Sudan.

The working definition of "displaced" used in this study corresponds with its usage in the report of the representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons:

> **Persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee their homes or places of habitual residence suddenly or unexpectedly as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, systematic violations of human rights or natural or man-made disaster and who have not crossed an internationally recognised boundary.**

The subjects of this study have had to flee their homes for all the reasons cited above except "natural or man-made disasters." In addition, other children, while not formally "displaced," occasionally participate in the programs to be described as part of a larger category of "war-affected" persons, victims of the ongoing conflict in South Sudan.[1]

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[1] For a discussion of definitions see: **Internally Displaced Persons: An Interim Report to the United Nations Secretary-General on Protection and Assistance** by Francis Mading Deng (December 1994)

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 A State of Crisis

The following report documents efforts to educate children who have fled their homes because of civil war in Sudan. Current estimates put the overall number of displaced people at about 2,000,000, most of whom reside at present in southern states, the Transitional Zone of the Nuba Mountains and southern Darfur, and four official camps for the displaced in Khartoum State. The displaced come from over 60 different ethno-linguistic groups. Many do not speak Arabic at all. Others combine use of their local languages with a kind of pidgin Arabic. Some others speak only a variation of Arabic indigenous to southern Sudan, so that the common tongue among displaced groups is a kind of creole Arabic different from the country's official language. Since many residents of South Sudan have been educated in English, English serves as a secondary shared language. Although there are no accurate statistics available, it is generally accepted that most displaced people believe in traditional African religions as opposed to the majority of their countrymen who are Muslim and the significant number who are Christian.

Currently, the UNICEF Emergency Education Program works with 480,000 school aged children in the principal regions with displaced communities. In the context of the international campaign to improve basic education, these children form a special case as it is impossible to separate their needs from the ongoing war. Many of the children in question have been qualified as "war-traumatised," and are in need of extensive psychological care. This crucial aspect of educating displaced children is not usually included in standard notions of basic education.

There are an estimated 65,000 children who are "unaccompanied," either orphans or children who have been separated from their families. Since 1994, children, as young as 8 years old in some cases, have been wandering alone through southern Sudan and parts of Ethiopia. Those who survive live through extreme conditions of war and poverty. In far too many cases, children are sold into slavery or forced to join the fighting. Once these children reach camps for the displaced most of them are diagnosed as war-traumatised.[2]

To understand the situation of displaced children is to understand that many of them continue to live in territories still being fought over; thus, periodically, there is considerable

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[2] The "unaccompanied" children of Sudan have received some international attention over the years:

1) "The Last Place on Earth," Roger Rosenblatt in **Vanity Fair**, July 1993, pp. 81-120

2) "Tragedy Stalks the Horn," in **National Geographic** vol. 184, no. 2, August 1993, pp. 108-116

3) **Children of Sudan: Slaves, Street Children and Child Soldiers**. Human Rights Watch-Africa. September, 1995

violence and bloodshed. It is common for teachers and students to be killed or seriously wounded during moments of confrontation between the government and the insurgents. Often teachers and students simply flee the site of the fighting, making it impossible to continue running a school. Those who survive often suffer from trauma and inevitably experience the confusion brought about when control of an area and its schools changes hands. Aside from occasional eruptions of fighting near schools, the education of displaced children also suffers from an insufficient number of school buildings, shortages of school materials and teachers (the estimated average teacher:student ratio is 1:47) and a lack of clean water.

Another group of children often unable to go to school without major disruptions are those who are subject to the government's policy in Khartoum state of relocating displaced communities from illegal squatter settlements into officially assigned locations. This process interrupts and sometimes terminates the school year for many.

The overall situation can only be described, to paraphrase the United Nations Development Program's 1994 Assessment of Displaced Camps, as a crisis. A March 1995 Save the Children-UK study asserts that 80% of the school-aged children living in displaced camps are not in school. The United Nations Consolidated Inter Agency Appeal for Sudan has recently confirmed such estimates, reporting that less than 25% of the children in the displaced camps in Khartoum state are attending school.

1.2 Methodology and Organisation of the Case Study

The following case study is the result of consultation with many people who regularly confront this challenge. The authors were able to interview many members of the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) and representatives of state ministries in the South Sudan. UNICEF field officers in the Transition Zone and in Juba were interviewed. Using the EFA World Declaration as a guideline, a questionnaire was prepared and used to assess the contribution of various NGOs. Education officials and executives of al Daawa al Islaamiyya and Muwaffaq al Khayriyya, the two main Islamic NGOs active in the education of displaced children, participated in long interviews. In addition, the authors visited the four official camps for displaced people in Khartoum state where they were able to observe classes, interview principals, teachers, and students, as well as conduct an evaluation of student writing skills in the upper primary grades.

UNDP organised two presentations in conjunction with the case study. The presentations provided a chance for government officials, UN officials, and NGO representatives to present their perspectives on how to improve the situation.

This case study is divided into three parts: an analysis of the principal partners and how they are involved in educating displaced children constitutes the first section; in the second section, the crucial question of language and curriculum will be addressed; the third section develops the themes of section two through a set of proposals which recognise a special opportunity to turn the education of displaced children into a chance to promote a long term peace.

1.3 An Acceptable Multiculturalism

It is clear that ending the war is the key to improving basic education for all children. During the Barcelona Symposium on the Fundamental Problems of Sudan (23 September-26 September), both parties in the conflict acknowledged the importance of considering a greater institutional representation of Sudan's cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity. This diversity becomes very concrete in the context under consideration. For this reason, the authors of this study believe that the very daunting situation briefly described above, in fact, offers a possible important first step towards the creation of an acceptable multiculturalism.

CHAPTER TWO - PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

The education of displaced children would not be possible without the work of many groups: the government of Sudan, several UN agencies, religious associations, and non-government organisations. An important feature of this combined effort is the autonomy of each organisation involved. Thus, the following evaluation will consider each partner individually before examining the ways in which they work together.

2.1 The Government of Sudan

Since April of 1991 the policy of the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE) has been to phase out schools in the camps and to integrate displaced children into the regular, government-run schools. While the FMOE has ultimate authority over the school system, state ministries of education are responsible for the schools within their borders. Teachers receive their training at the FMOE In-Service Teacher Training Institute (ISETTI). The Educational Planning Directorate, the principal branch of the FMOE responsible for educational policy, works with the state ministries and state Emergency Education committees to monitor the schools nationwide. All research towards improving curriculum is conducted at the Curriculum Development Centre of Bahkt al Ruda in Al Duwaym.

The fundamental goal of the FMOE for the years to come is consistent with the EFA World Declaration: ensuring universal primary education by the year 2001, and establishing a three year secondary program. The additional goals of the FMOE are reflected in a ten-year Comprehensive National Strategy (CNS) devised in 1991 for all schools in Sudan. The CNS guides the efforts of all organisations working specifically with displaced children:

-the use of one national curriculum;

-the use of Arabic as the sole language of instruction;

-full control by the government over all the schools;

-centralised planning by the FMOE;

-the teaching of English as an essential subject;

-the use of the schools as a means of consolidating religious (Islamic or Christian) and ethical education, of fostering the values of co-operation, self-reliance, and reliance on Allah; and

-the treatment of Sudan's cultural and religious diversity in a positive way that enhances national unity;

2.2 The United Nations

In the effort to educate displaced children, the UN has been represented by several agencies. The principal partner has been UNICEF through its Emergency Education Program, launched in 1992 in Sudan, currently funded by a $3.5 million grant from the government of the Netherlands and a $1.5 million grant from the Tetsuko Kuroyanni Foundation of Japan. The goals of the Emergency Education Program are comprehensive:

-improving the opportunities and quality of education for war-affected children;

-increasing school enrolment levels, particularly for girls;

-keeping the schools open in areas where the fighting continues;

-promoting a stable environment for war-affected children; and

-providing the necessary psychological care for traumatised children.

Currently under construction is a UNICEF-sponsored Child Trauma Centre in Juba. The centre will allow for more teachers and community-based care givers to receive specialised training. In addition, it is hoped that the centre will provide leadership through research, advocacy, and policy formulation relevant to the care of traumatised children.

UNICEF has also designed a program for adolescents who have never attended school. Such children are encouraged to enter primary school at the upper level while learning with a special curriculum tailored to their needs and administered by community based NGOs.

There is a similar effort designed especially to address the problem of educating girls. According to the UNDP 1994 Assessment of Displaced Camps, the number of girls going to school is only half that of the number of boys. In the southern states it is only about 20%. One step toward highlighting the importance of education for girls has been to increase the number of female teachers while encouraging greater involvement on their part during the training process. In many cases, girls are kept out of school in order to work at home with their mothers. Thus, many of the forms of relief designed to enhance family incomes indirectly help keep children in school.

Another UN intervention that has had a important impact on the education of displaced children has been the work of the World Food Program. The World Food Program's (WFP) activities are guided by two principal goals: providing school meal programs and providing food for people who build new schools. As of 1995, WFP has begun to cooperate with UNICEF in the "Mobile Emergency Education by Barge Project," a program in which WFP

barges are used to transport teams along the Nile corridor and distribute education kits to children living in areas where it is difficult to attend regular schools. It is hoped that this program will allow another 400,000 children to benefit from current efforts to improve education in war torn parts of the country.

Other UN agencies that have participated in the care and education of displaced children include UNESCO, UNHCR, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and the UNDP.

2.3 Non-Governmental Organisations

Non-governmental agencies have been vitally important partners in the effort to educate displaced children. One organisation that can be singled out is the Save the Children Fund-UK (SCF-UK). SCF-UK has been particularly active in Khartoum State constructing classrooms and well-ventilated latrines in schools, training teachers, and providing school supplies, salary incentives for teachers, and clean water. SCF-UK is the only international NGO to have signed a formal agreement with the FMOE. In March of 1995, SCF-UK sponsored a seminar for all partners involved in the education of the displaced.

The Islamic NGOs, the Catholic Church, and the Sudan Council of Churches all actively contribute to the overall effort. The Islamic NGOs Muwaffaq Foundation and Islamic Call "al Daawa al Islamiyya" have been particularly present in rural areas where they have been integrating preschool and primary level education. Since the FMOE took control of all the schools in 1992 there has been some tension between the FMOE and Christian groups, tension which has eased somewhat since the government relaxed the terms of its authority. Typically, schools that were once church-run are now officially run by the government, but church officials exercise a degree of independence as far as the day-to-day details of administration.

2.4 Co-operation between Organisations

While there is considerable "vertical" co-operation between the FMOE and UN organisations, Islamic NGOs, SCF-UK, and community groups, the amount of co-operation at a "horizontal" level, between NGOs, appears to be less frequent. Each of the organisations involved tends to run their own programs separately, with government guidelines being the common factor. A program officer from SCF-UK has noted recently that, as far as the displaced are concerned, "there is very little co-operation and no coordination among the NGOs involved. Each operates independently, resulting in unnecessary duplication of efforts, inefficient and wasteful use of scarce resources."

The education of the displaced is very much conditioned by the war, which creates uncertainties in terms of mobilizing funds and establishing clear long term, time-bound targets. Most groups seem to deal with the situation on a yearly basis, with funds being pledged for fairly discrete projects. Nevertheless, the various organisations currently working in Sudan appear to be committed to long term assistance.

2.5 Evaluation of Organisations

Each of the partners presented above displays certain strengths and weaknesses. The

FMOE, with its Educational Planning Directorate, its Curriculum Development Centre, its printing press, its computer-based statistics and research division, is a formidable integrated structure for directing national education. Its principal weakness, to be examined further in the next two sections,currently funded by a $3.5 million grant from the government of the Netherlands and a $1.5 million grant from the Tetsuko Kuroyanni Foundation of Japan. is its recalcitrance in the face of proposals to allow children to use their local languages when they first come to school. A related weakness is a relative indifference to complaints from communities where there is considerable religious diversity that the national curriculum is heavily weighted toward the dissemination of Islamic values.

The strengths and weakness of UN involvement are interrelated: on the one hand, the UN is uniquely positioned to be the most effective partner because it is bound by a stance of neutrality, and its mandate is to assist children on both sides of the conflict; however, it is not an implementing agency, and must rely on the co-operation of NGOs which may not share the same code of conduct for humanitarian engagements.

Religious groups are capable of mobilising large numbers of young men and women to work at the grass roots level, often under the most difficult conditions. However, there are indications that, in some instances, these organisations have combined proselytism with educating. The issue here is not whether they should or should not advance their religious agendas within or outside the educational system. The issue is rather that they should acknowledge that, in the context of a conflict with perceived religious dimensions, religious activities linked to humanitarian aid might exacerbate the situation.

CHAPTER THREE - LANGUAGE AND CURRICULUM

To understand the complexities of educating the displaced in Sudan, it is necessary to appreciate certain basic issues of education in the country and how they directly relate to the ongoing conflict. The following section will explore the controversies surrounding the content of the national curriculum, the primacy of Arabic as the language of instruction, and the question of cultural diversity.

3.1 - Arabic and the National Curriculum

Currently, the Sudanese government is committed to promoting Arabic as the language of national unity. Arabic is the only language used in schools controlled by the FMOE, both in the classroom and in the textbooks. Much of the material used to develop language skills originally derives from the Islamic religion. There is considerable enthusiasm for the current curriculum among certain Islamic NGOs and support, as well, from other groups in southern Sudan in favour of the unity that a national curriculum represents.

The national curriculum is due to change, to become more sensitive to the needs of non-Arabic speaking children. In 1991, the National Curriculum Development Centre in Bahkt al Ruda proposed a new curriculum to be implemented during the school year 1995-1996. The new curriculum is intended to provide a more culturally representative program of study for all children in Sudan. One key feature under development is a "Book of Sounds" commissioned from Dr. Yusuf al Khalifa Abu Bakr. The book is meant to assist non-Arabic

speaking children in learning the basic Arabic sounds. In the fall of 1995, the government collaborated with the United Nations to draft the Sudan Country Strategy Note (CSN) for Partnership towards Sustainable Human Development which underscores the commitment towards "(developing) school curricula which cater to regional multilingual and multicultural systems of social values while strengthening national unity."

3.2 The Case for Local Languages

The current demand for some form of accommodation with local languages in the schools dates back as far as 1989. The National Dialogue Conference of Peace Issues in Sudan, held in September and October of 1989, called for the development of local languages and cultures within the school system. In February of 1990, The National Conference on the Displaced included, as an introduction to its own recommendations, the proposals on local languages made the previous year during the fall meeting. In October of 1995, a group of five southern Sudanese intellectuals wrote a letter to the President of the Republic about "Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan," in which they stressed the dangers of linguistic discrimination and the opportunities for creative use of linguistic diversity.[3]

In the areas controlled by the insurgents, local languages are already being used in the schools. With the support of UNICEF (Nairobi), more than 1,000 schools have begun using local languages in the classroom.[4] According to the July 1995 progress report of Operation Lifeline Sudan, textbooks in local languages are being used in Dinka, Nuer, Jur Modo, Moru, Lothu, Toposa, Shilluk, Avokaya, Kresh, Ndogo, Zande, Bari, Baka, Mundu, and Luwo. These books were developed with the assistance of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

In 1995 the Sudan Council of Churches qualified the issue of language as the number one problem faced by educators of displaced children, stating that "(m)ost of the displaced children do not know enough Arabic to fit into school." The authors of this report observed firsthand the difficulties language problems create. Children unable to speak Arabic often experience fear and anxiety, which easily lead to frustration and, at times, to humiliation. These experiences appear to cause many children to stay out of school. The varying levels of fluency in Arabic among displaced students makes a teacher's job very difficult when presenting a lesson to a large class. Many teachers are frustrated by the need to rely on translators to communicate with non-Arabic speaking children and admit to ignoring these children sometimes in favour of those students able to follow lessons. A significant number of the children who had been receiving an education in English prior to their displacement do not attend school at all when faced with learning Arabic.

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[3] The letter was signed by Abel Alier (former president of the High Executive Council of Southern Sudan), Ezekiel M. Kodi (former head of the Sudan Council of Churches), Joseph Ukel Abango, Isaiah Kulang Mabor and Henry Tong Chol.

[4] This information was ascertained during a conversation with a UNICEF program officer from Nairobi

As part of the gathering of information for this case study, a group of displaced children were asked to write compositions as a demonstration of their language skills. The results suggest that many of them, even after five or six years of schooling, are unable to write Arabic at an acceptable level. Classroom observation leads to the conclusion that many are equally incapable of reading at an appropriate level. Pilot learning achievement tests currently being conducted in Southern Kordofan State gave preliminary indications that the academic achievement of many displaced children is low.

3.3 Islamisation

Language is not the only source of debate over the national curriculum. There is a belief among some groups in southern Sudan that the current national curriculum serves, in part, as an instrument for the dissemination of Islamic and Arabic culture. Those who subscribe to this perception view the Islamic NGOs as implementing agencies of the government agenda.[5] Some teachers in church schools claim that certain texts selected for use in Arabic and History lead not infrequently to confusion among Christian school children.

CHAPTER FOUR - TOWARDS PEACE

4.1 A Fruitful Domain for Co-operation

Participants to the Barcelona Symposium on the Fundamental Problems of the Sudan, held in September 1995, affirmed that "the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity of Sudan constitutes a potential wealth of the people of the country and should be given effective constitutional and institutional expression." In proposing the teaching of local languages of southern Sudan, in northern Sudan, and the establishment of a Centre for Sudanese Studies and a South Sudan Culture and Development Institute, the representatives of both sides of the conflict have suggested a mutual desire to find an appropriate framework for working towards greater national unity. The hope for an acceptable way out of the current impasse has inspired the authors of this report to highlight aspects of educating displaced children which, despite all the formidable obstacles, could fit into the overall

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[5] For further reports on and discussions of the issue of "Islamisation" see:
1) "Islamic Hegemonies in Sudan" R.S. O'Fahey, **Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa**, ed. Louis Brener, Hurst & Company, London 1993;
2) **Sudan Cry for Peace**, Pax Christi International, pp. 45-60;
3) Christian Solidarity International "Visit Sudan reports 1995;
4) Reports of the Special Rapporteur to the Commission on Human Rights. Social and Economic Council. February 1994
5) "War of Visions for the Nation," Francis Mading Deng in **Sudan: State and Society in Crisis**, ed. John O. Voll, Indiana University Press, 1991;
6) **Sudan's Invisible Citizens: The Policy of Abuse Against Displaced People in the North.** African Rights, February 1995. See particularly the chapter "Forced Acculturation and the Moslem Brother's Project for Transforming Sudan" pp. 15-25 >
7) "Peaceful Resolution of the Conflict in Sudan" (see note 3)

agenda defined in Barcelona.

At its most fundamental level, education represents a fruitful domain for co-operation. Presumably all parties involved want the next generation of Sudanese to receive the best education possible. As the schools provide children with the basic knowledge that is indispensable to the country's future economic development, so too could they be an important locus of the country's future social and cultural development.

4.2 Interviews with FMOE Officials

As part of the review process for this case study, long interviews were conducted with top officials at the FMOE[6] who appear to be considering the possibility of some kind of co-operation with the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SRRA), the civilian wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement which directs education in insurgent controlled areas. The interviews were individual and the following proposals were made to each FMOE interviewee:

> -The FMOE should start a program of limited use of local languages during the first two years of schooling in selected schools. Such a program would constitute a sign of good faith. In addition, it would help ease the introduction into school of young children who do not speak Arabic, assist teachers, and combat drop out rates during the early years of primary education;
>
> -Educational planners from both sides should meet with some regularity to discuss issues of mutual concern. For example, they could devise guidelines for when control of schools in disputed areas changes sides. But the main focus should be on establishing the convergence of educational policies in anticipation of a resolution of the conflict;
>
> -As a gesture of good will, the FMOE should provide the schools under insurgent control with textbooks for Arabic and English classes as well as books for Islamic and Christian education;and
>
> -Joint cultural and sporting events should be held for school children across front lines.

Top officials interviewed have agreed that, in principle, there might be a case for the use of local languages. They all stressed, however, that if the local languages were to be used, they should be written in Arabic script.

It was suggested during the interviews that the UN should act as a mediator between the two sides, and assist in discerning the precise steps to be taken during any joint efforts.

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[6] The interviews were conducted in October of 1995 by Ushari Ahmad Mahmud with the Minister of Education, the Under-Secretary of the Minister of Education, the head of the Curriculum Development Centre, the head of the Educational Planning Directorate, and the head of the School Activities Directorate.

List of Acronyms

CNS	Comprehensive National Strategy
CSN	Sudan Country Strategy Note
EFA	Education For All
FMOE	Federal Ministry of Education
ISETTI	In-service Teacher-Training Institute
SCF-UK	Save the Children Fund - United Kingdom
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund